

## YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Wild animals, uneven ground, and changing weather can pose dangers. Other accidents people cause themselves, through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and other decisions they make.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your hands. Keep alert. Watch where you step. Read the warnings below and on bulletin boards, and ask a ranger for advice.

# Be Safe!

## RISK & RESPONSIBILITY

**DROWNING** is the #1 cause of death in national parks. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible. Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength. Be extra careful along rivers and streams; falling in is as dangerous as swimming.

**TICKS:** Common in foothill grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a ranger's and/or doctor's advice.

**PLAGUE:** Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry and snack often. If others don't respond to the need for

warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

**LIGHTNING:** As soon as you see dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder, get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible.

Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from bodies of water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

### SAFE PARK TRAVEL:

Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Beware of uneven or slippery surfaces. Wear sunglasses and sunscreen. Share

roads and trails with others: cars, bikes, walkers, and wildlife all travel here. Check your planned route for potential avalanche areas.

### RATTLESNAKES:

Watch where you put your hands and feet. Most common in the foothills, rattlesnakes are protected in parks. Most bites result from teasing or trying to handle snakes. Few people die from bites, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.

**COUGARS:** Mountain lions roam throughout the area. Your chances of seeing one, especially an aggressive one, are very low, but cougars have been known to attack people and pets, so be aware. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead of you. If you meet a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey and may be dangerous to it:

- Don't run. Cougars associate running with prey and give chase.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the lion.
- Pick up children.
- If the lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** Never burn charcoal in a tent, camper, or RV. Carbon monoxide, an odorless and colorless gas, can be fatal.

**POISON OAK:** This common shrub grows in the foothills up to 5000 feet elevation. Red in fall with

whitish berries, bare in winter, in spring it has shiny green leaves in groups of three. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes as soon as possible.

### SAFE DRINKING

**WATER:** Each of the parks' 13 water systems is tested regularly to ensure that it meets state and federal standards. Annual Consumer Confidence Reports are available at visitor centers, or call 559-565-3341.

**OZONE POLLUTION:** The air quality index forecast is displayed in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm afternoon winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, and peak in late afternoon. These peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" levels, according to state and federal standards. Ozone forms in sunlight from gases in car and factory exhaust. This statewide problem challenges us all to reduce pollution: sleds, skis, cars, bikes, snowmobiles, and on foot.

### OPERATION NO-GROW

- Prevent illegal marijuana growing in parks
- Protect visitor & employee safety
- Preserve our natural resources
- Promote your National Park experience!

Keep your parks safe and free from illegal activities! Please report any suspicious activities to 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

**UNSAFE WATER:** Giardia, a protozoan in lakes and streams, causes intestinal problems. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria or Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil river or lake water for at least 3 minutes.

## Rules of the Road

### TRAFFIC DELAYS - SEQUOIA

Expect delays on the Generals Highway between Hospital Rock and Giant Forest, and near the Sherman Tree. See page 5 for details.

### DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Always downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gearshift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder as it slows you down, but it will save your brakes.

### ROAD CONDITIONS

24-hour recording: 1-559-565-3341 then press 9, then 4.

### LET OTHERS PASS

Slower vehicles must use paved turnouts to let traffic pass.

### EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

Need towing? Call 24-hour park switchboard: 565-3341 then press zero. AAA: For out-of-gas, lock outs, jump starts, minor repairs - In Sequoia call 565-4070 (24-hour); in Kings Canyon call 335-2135.

### STAY ON PAVEMENT

To protect soils & plants, you must park & travel on pavement only.

### LENGTH ADVISORY

On 12 narrow miles from Potwisha Campground to Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia, advised maximum vehicle length is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum legal length limit on the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicles plus a towed unit. An alternate route is Hwy 180 from Fresno, a straighter, less steep, and wider road. If you are towing a car, try camping in the foothills and using it to explore.

### PREVENT CAR FIRES

Hot brakes and mufflers start fires in dry grass. Don't stop in grassy areas; use paved turnouts only.

### FINDING GASOLINE

No gas stations within the park. Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill your gas tank in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or in the National Forest at:

- Stony Creek Village 1-559-565-3909: 24 hours with credit card. Between Wuksachi and Grant Grove on the Generals Hwy.
- Hume Lake Christian Camps 559-335-2000: 24 hours with credit card. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.
- Kings Canyon Lodge 1-559-335-2405: usually 9am-dark, call to confirm. 17 miles (27 km) north from Grant Grove on Hwy 180.

### MOTORCYCLES

Avoid oil buildup in the center of the uphill lane.

### NARROW WINDING ROADS

IN KINGS CANYON & NATIONAL FOREST / SEQUOIA MONUMENT—Panoramic Point Road: No trailers or motorhomes.

Redwood Mountain Road: Unpaved, rough.

IN SEQUOIA —

Mineral King Road: RVs & trailers not recommended (not permitted in campgrounds).

Moro Rock / Crescent Meadow Road: Winding, steep. RVs & trailers not recommended.

Crystal Cave Road: Maximum vehicle length 22' (6.7m). RVs & trailers not recommended.

South Fork Road: Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet.

### BICYCLES

Ride only on roads (not trails), single file with traffic, and wear light-colored clothes after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet.